

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LUSAKA 01196 061621Z
ACTION PC-10

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FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8093

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 1196

FOR PEACE CORPS DEPUTY DIRECTOR MARY E. KING

FROM STEVE LOW

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS:
SUBJ: PEACE CORPS IN ZAMBIA

REF: STATE 87481

1. SINCE 1960 THERE HAS BEEN NO MORE ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORTER OF THE PEACE CORPS IN AFRICA THAN I. NOR IS ANYONE MORE ANXIOUS TO GET A PROGRAM STARTED IN ZAMBIA THAN I. IN SPITE OF THIS, I BELIEVE THAT AN APPROACH TO THE ZAMBIANS AT THIS MOMENT TO CONSIDER BRINGING PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS INTO THE COUNTRY WOULD BE UNWISE AND WOULD BE LIKELY TO SET BACK FUTURE POSSIBILITIES FOR A PROGRAM.

2. THE PEOPLE WITH WHOM YOU SPOKE IN GENEVA LAST MAY ARE COMPETENT TECHNICIANS WHO, HOWEVER, HAVE VERY LITTLE POLITICAL WEIGHT IN ZAMBIAN SOCIETY. THOSE WHO WILL MAKE A DECISION ON WHETHER OR NOT TO HAVE A PEACE CORPS PROGRAM ARE AT THE MEMENT COMPLETELY PREOCCUPIED WITH THE ATTEMPT TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE INCREASINGLY COMPLICATED RHODESIAN PROBLEM IN ORDER TO AVOID MILITARY CONFRONTATION. THEY HAVE WARNED US PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY OF THE SERIOUS DANGER OF SOVIET AND CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE EVENT WE DO NOT FIND A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION.
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THEIR PROBLEMS OF PUBLIC ORDER ARE DAILY AGGRAVATED BY INCREASING NUMBERS OF LIBERATION ARMY CAMPS COMPLICATED BY CRIMINAL ACTIVITY.

3. I UNDERSTAND YOUR POINT THAT EVEN IF WE BEGAN TODAY A PROGRAM COULD NOT BE DEVELOPED IN LESS THAN 18 MONTHS. NEVERTHELESS I BELIEVE THE POLITICALLY RESPONSIBLE ZAMBIANS WILL

NOT EVEN CONSIDER THE MATTER AT THIS STAGE. IF WE WERE TO BROACH IT NOW, IT WOULD MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR US TO TAKE IT UP AGAIN IN FOUR OR FIVE MONTHS SHOULD THERE BE A BREAK IN THE RHODESIAN SITUATION.

4. I THEREFORE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT WE DO NOT BRING UP WITH THE GRZ THE POSSIBILITY OF A PEACE CORPS PROGRAM AT THIS STAGE. WE WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO TALK TO DR. GAYMON SHOULD HE WISH TO PROCEED TO LUSAKA ON THE 14TH AND EXPLAIN TO HIM THE SITUATION IN GREATER DETAIL. I AM NOT SURE I MYSELF WILL BE HERE BUT MEMBERS OF MY STAFF WILL CERTAINLY WELCOME HIM. IN THE MEANTIME I SUGGEST YOU MAY WISH TO DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH DICK MOOSE.

LOW

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